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Shortgrass Country

By Monte Noelke

March and April are special months in our neighborhood. Those are the times Goat Whiskers the Younger has all of his fresh shorn goats contained in a trap so they can be put in the barn in case of rain. For the other 10 months of the year, the Whiskers' flocks wander over three or four ranches and one highway right-of-way.

The bloodlines of all Angora goats trace back to a string of registered goats sired by Nomad and out of Old Gypsy. Such horn and hair operators as Whiskers are willing to overlook the lineage's urge to travel, in favor of the fine curly fleeces they produce at shearing.

We call every Monday morning to report the known amount of strays on our outfit. An answering device records the call, and when Whiskers comes in for lunch he dispatches a couple of hands to retrieve them. Care has to be taken to see each report gives the date, the time and the pasture of the last sighting; otherwise his crew may be hunting last Thursday's spill north of the highway, instead of taking care of the breakout last Wednesday on the south side of the road.

Precise coordinates with exact latitude and longitude readings are necessary. Capturing and recapturing the same

offenders puts a fine edge on the temperament of the cowboys, not to mention the tenderness of leg and posterior that develops from their skin rubbing against stamped saddle leather while hunting five head in a four section pasture.

I haven't personally ever seen all of his goats at home at one time. However, it is bound to be an exciting event for all concerned at Whisker's ranch.

Now that mohair is worth more money, I am going to recommend that he hire a full time goat patrol to run down his escapees. We can go on indefinitely on the present program, but round the clock shifts could do a lot of good.